



Estate Inspections Policy

December 2023

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1. Introduction

SW9 Community Housing (SW9 CH) aims to provide high quality estate management for the benefit of the residents of the 1700 homes it owns and manages. Effective estate inspections ensure that the estate and neighbourhood are a place where people want to live and feel safe.

The communal areas and open spaces of our estate, blocks and schemes have a significant impact on the quality of life of our residents and the perception of SW9 CH within the wider community. Consequently, we consider the management and maintenance of our estate to be of critical importance and vital to maintaining resident satisfaction. Our estate inspections allow us to check what is happening and agree with our residents what needs to be done to improve conditions.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims & objectives of this policy and procedure are to:

- Help keep our estates and communal areas safe and attractive places to live.
- Set out SW9 CH's approach to estate inspections.
- Actions SW9 CH will take to maintain its estate.
- How and when estate inspections will be carried out, recorded, and monitored.
- How we will work with our service partners to ensure standards are met.

This policy applies to all SW9 CH properties, where we have responsibility for carrying out cleaning and ground maintenance.

3. Policy Statement

SW9 CH is committed to maintaining its estate and communal areas to a high standard to ensure that residents feel safe and can take pride in their estate and neighborhood.

Estate inspections are a tool which assist us with increasing tenant satisfaction with cleanliness and maintenance of the estate in line with the tenant satisfaction measure (TP10 "satisfaction that the landlord keeps the communal areas clean and well maintained" and TP11 "Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive impact to the community.")

SW9 CH will carry out estate inspections to ensure that customers and visitors to the estate enjoy a safe, peaceful, clean and tidy environment that is well maintained. Our inspections will include monitoring of the following examples:

- Hard surfaces owned by SW9 CH including roads, pathways, car parking/garage areas, bin stores
- Grass, trees, hedges and shrub beds in our communal areas including weed control
- Internal and external cleaning
- Security issues e.g. lighting or fencing, internal communal areas

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- Abandoned cars
- Fly tipping
- Graffiti
- Playgrounds (using a bespoke playground form)

SW9 CH will use estate inspections to monitor the safety of the common areas of our estate and will initiate remedial action where hazards are identified, and risks are found to be not tolerable.

SW9 CH will use estate inspections to promote and encourage customer and stakeholder involvement in the management and upkeep of the estate.

All staff who undertake Estate and Block inspections are expected to undertake all relevant training, including that related to health and safety.

4. Definitions

Estate	A group of properties built as a single development or where there are shared communal spaces managed by SW9 CH.
Estate Inspection	An inspection of the estate, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the monitoring of services paid for by residents • the exterior and communal parts • facilities and grounds of an estate
Estate Services Contractor	The company, or companies, that SW9 CH has a contract with to manage the grounds maintenance and cleaning on the Estate.
Cleaning	The cleaning of the communal areas of housing blocks. As well as ensuring that the areas around housing blocks and on housing estates are kept clean, litter and detritus free
Grounds Maintenance (External contractor)	The cutting and maintenance of grassy areas; the maintenance of shrubs, hedges and bushes; weed control of all hard and soft areas; annual and routine maintenance of trees including major works; pond maintenance.

5. Objectives

Estate inspections take place because they allow us an opportunity to check on the condition (repair); safety and cleanliness of the communal areas that we manage. Estate inspections allow us to formally record and capture issues and ensure that our contractors are fulfilling their contractual obligations. SW9 CH also aims to provide services which deliver value for money.

6. How SW9 CH will advertise Estate Inspections

SW9 CH will use a variety of avenues to advertise monthly Block Estate inspections, this will include:

- Noticeboards
- Word of mouth
- Website
- Newsletter

7. What SW9 CH does with the Estate Inspection Findings

SW9 CH will use the score and findings from estate inspections to monitor estate services contractors, improve services and manage risk.

SW9 CH will provide the outcomes of Block Estate Inspections and the actions to be taken as requested.

8. Estate Inspection Scoring Standards

The House Mark Photo Book sets out four standards:

A	-	Very Good
B	-	Satisfactory
C	-	Poor
D	-	Unacceptable

Full details of how these scores are derived, including supporting photographic evidence, are shown in the House Mark Estate Services Photo Book. We will use our notice boards and website to promote these standards.

SW9 CH will expect all sites to achieve a minimum Satisfactory (e.g., for older blocks showing more wear and tear) or Very Good Standard (4). If these are not met, we expect issues found to be rectified as soon as reasonably practicable.

Non-compliance with SW9 CH's health and safety policy will be reported for action with a priority that is proportionate to the risk identified.

9. Resident Involvement

Our aim is to ensure residents play a prominent and influential role in the scoring of estate inspections whether this is through local involvement. Involvement takes place in a number of ways:

- Residents attending estate inspections as and when they are available
- Residents contacting us prior to inspections taking place to raise issues
- Resident associations providing views regarding estate issues
- Surveys and Questionnaires
- Feedback via our website

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Residents attending the monthly block inspections will be sent a copy of the block inspection form within 7 working days of completing the inspection.

The results of the block inspections will be published on the website on a monthly basis and a copy of the Housemark Guide has been uploaded to enable residents to understand the scoring system.

Where a complaint or resident feedback has been received regarding estate services, the feedback will be used to guide improvement.

10. External Playground Inspections

An external playground inspection company undertakes an audit of the playgrounds on an annual basis. Any actions from the audit must be actioned depending on their risk rating. The percentage of actions completed are to be included on the KPI scorecard.

11. Performance monitoring and responsibilities

SW9 CH will set a target of 90% of the estate achieving a minimum satisfactory standard at all times.

The objective is to inspect each block on the estate once a month. There will be a target of 100% of all due inspections to be completed within the calendar year.

SW9 CH will monitor the impact of this policy to ensure appropriate and consistent application using the following:

- 100 % of estate inspections completed annually
- Benchmarking our service against other Registered Providers
- Customer satisfaction survey

Where there are issues with contractor performance, we will raise them through regular performance meetings with our Estate Services team.

We will work with staff, residents, and partners to identify areas where we can improve our performance. Where improvements are implemented, we will monitor them to see how effective they have been before introducing them across our stock.

The following are responsible for the implementation of this Policy:

- **Head of Neighbourhoods**
- **Property Services Manager**
- **Estate Services Manager**
- **Repairs Manager**
- **Neighbourhood Services Manager**

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12. Related documents

- Estate Services contract specification
- House Mark Estate Services Photo Book (April 2013)
- Fire Safety Policy
- Fire Risk Assessments
- Health and Safety Policy
- Balconies and Communal Areas Policy
- Community Engagement Strategy
- ASB Policy and Procedure

13. Legislation and regulation

The legislation listed in this policy is not intended to cover all legislation applicable to this policy. To meet the required RSH Governance & Financial Viability Standard outcome on adherence to all relevant law, SW9 CH will take reasonable measures to ensure compliance with any and all applicable legislation by reviewing policies and procedures and amending them as appropriate.

The legislation listed within this policy was considered at the time of the development of this policy, but subsequent primary and secondary legislation, case law and regulatory or other requirements will be considered, and the policy reviewed and adopted in accordance with the requirements set out therein, even should such subsequent legislation not be explicitly listed within this policy. Any queries relating to the applicable legislation should be directed to the policy author.

14. Equality and diversity

We will apply this policy consistently and fairly, and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

15. Review

All policies should be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum, or sooner if there is a specific legislative, regulatory or service requirement or change in guidance, law or practice.

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Policy author:	Estate Services Manager	
Policy owner:	Head of Operations and Customer Service	
Adopted from Network Homes: y/n	Yes	
Review schedule (1, 2 or 3 years):	3 years	
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	Date completed	
	Initial or full EIA	

Change Record

Date	Reviewed by (name and title)	Version	Summary of changes
September 2023	Michelle Levy, Estate Services Manager, Zoe Christodoulou, Policy & Performance Lead	Version 3.0	3-yearly review

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